

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

A COMMENTARY ON

THE SECRETS OF THE SELF

اسرار خودی

DR. MOHAMMAD IQBAL

BY

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CHAPTER ONE

Asrar-e-Khudi or the Secrets of the Self is the first published work of Dr. Mohammad Iqbal. Since its publication in 1915 it has invited both criticism and acclaim.

Asrar-e-Khudi was translated into English by the noted orientalist Dr. Reynold A. Nicholson, whose contribution to oriental studies also includes translation of selected poems from Dewan Shams Tarbiz by Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi and Studies in Islamic Mysticism. Nicholson read the Mathnavi with Muhammad Shafi, professor of Arabic at Lahore, with whom he discussed “many points of difficulty”.

In his introduction, Dr. Nicholson makes a point that in contrast to the Hindu philosophers who appeal to the head in explaining the doctrine of the unity of being, Allama Iqbal takes a more dangerous course like the Persian poets, and aims at the heart. His message is aimed at the Muslims everywhere. He aims at becoming the “voice of the poet of tomorrow and the champion of a new spirit”. Iqbal’s philosophy owes a great deal to Nietzsche and Bergson, while his poetry reminds his readers of Shelley. Yet he remains a Muslim at heart who carries “the vision of a New Mecca, a world-wide theocratic and Utopian state in which all Moslems, no longer divided by the barriers of race and country, shall be one”.

Iqbal cherished a world ruled by religion, not by politics; his ideal is a free and independent Muslim fraternity with Ka’aba as its center and knit together by the love of Allah and devotion to the Prophet, peace be upon him. He criticized Hindu intellectualism and Islamic pantheism for their lack of dynamism and proposed that in order to regain their lost supremacy the Muslims needed to work on their Khudi. The word Khudi or ego is not used in the sense of selfishness but in the context of self-affirmation, self-expression and self-development.

Iqbal considers every Muslim to be the shining star of the destiny of the Muslim nation. Each individual should strive towards perfection, a step towards Insaan-e-Kamil (Perfect Man) and in doing so everyone can contribute to the establishment of the Islamic Kingdom of God on earth. The

doctrine of self-abandonment, فنا, is rejected by the poet-philosopher despite his acknowledgment of Jalauddin Rumi as his mentor.

Dr. Nicholson did something unique by asking Iqbal to write a statement of his own philosophical views which was duly accepted. This makes an interesting reading. Here I will just give a few salient points from it.

All life is individual, there is no such thing as universal life. God Himself is an individual: He is the most Unique individual.

The universe is not a completed act; it is still in the course of formation and man too takes his share in its creation.

The moral and religious ideal of man is not self-negation but self-affirmation. In order to reach this ideal, man has to become more and more like the most Unique Individual. An individual who comes nearest to God is the most complete person.

The Ego (khudi) is partly free, partly determined and reaches fuller freedom by approaching the Individual who is the most free – God. Life is an endeavor for freedom.

In man the center of life becomes an Ego or Person. Personality is a state of tension that must be maintained for it to develop and survive. What fortifies personality is good and what weakens it is bad. Art, religion and ethics must be judged from the stand point of personality. If this state of tension is maintained then the shock of death would not affect personality. Death simply produces an interval of relaxation that lasts until the day of Resurrection. Egos that have taken good care during the present life will survive the state of relaxation.

Love fortifies ego and in its highest form, love is the creation of values and ideals and the endeavor to realize them. Love individualizes both the lover and the beloved.

For Iqbal realization of Ego is not uncontrolled freedom and total disregard for religious ethics. For him the Ego in its movement towards uniqueness has to pass through three stages:

Obedience to the law, self-control, which is the highest form of self-consciousness or Ego-hood, and Divine vicegerency or نیابت الهی or in other words, خلافت الله على الارض.

This recipe for attaining the complete Ego is derived from Islamic ideology.

Allama Iqbal quotes his mentor Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi before his own preface to Mathnavi اسرار خودی.

This sums up his conquest for the Perfect Man and serves as the launching pad for his poetry from that point onwards.

دی شیخ با چراغ ہمی گشت گرد شہر
کز دام و دو ملولم و انسانم آرزوست
زین ہمرہبان سست عناصر دلم گرفت
شیر خدا و رستم دستانم آرزوست
گفتم کہ یافت می نشود جستمہ ایم ما
گفت آنچه یافت می نشود آنم آرزوست

Last night an old man went around the town holding a lamp

I am sick of animals and beasts

I want to meet a (perfect) man.

I have grown weary of these inactive companions of mine

I am looking for a Lion of God and a Rustam

I said: "We have searched a lot but found none."

He said: "I look for those who are not to be found!"

“من کوتاهی نیست در خشک و تر بیشه
چوب بر نخل که منبر نشود دارکنم”

There is nothing useless in the dry and wet of my forest

If a twig of my palm tree cannot be made into a pulpit then I will make
gallows out of it.

Allama Iqbal started the prologue to his Mathnavi with a couplet from
Naziri, who was one of his favorite poets. In fact in his Message of the East
Iqbal paid tribute to Naziri by adding a مصرع to a famous مصرع of Naziri

بملك جم ندهم مصرع نظیری را
کسے کشته نہ شد از قبیلہ ما نیست

I will not exchange this hemistich of Naziri for the Kingdom of Jamshed

“Whoever did not get killed (in the path of love or honor) does not belong to
our tribe”

What he means by the introductory couplet is that his poetry contains
nothing that is useless. The word pulpit might mean a place for proclamation
of the truth, while gallows might imply being ready to pay the price for
challenging injustice. Iqbal indeed proclaimed what he perceived as the truth
and challenged the orthodoxy for its conservatism and lack of dynamism. He
did incur the wrath of the religious orthodoxy in India. Khawaja Hasan
Nizazmi and Akbar Ilahabadi were both not very pleased with some of
Iqbal’s comments on mystics and mysticism. Yusuf Saleem Chishti has
recorded some of the correspondence between Iqbal and the other two. Iqbal
had criticized Hafiz Shirazi in the first edition of the mathnavi Secrets of the
Self which were deleted from the second edition. Similary the introduction

to the first edition and some verses dedicated to Sir Syed Ali Imam were taken out.

Khawaja Hasan Nizami wrote a series of articles against the secrets of the self in his weekly magazine خطیب, while Pirzada Muzaffar Ahmad Fazli wrote a mathnavi against it titled راز بیخودی.

Akbar Ilahabadi tried to make peace between Iqbal and Nizam and sent the following verses to the latter.

حضرت اقبال اور خواجہ حسن
پهلوانی ان میں اُن میں بانکین
جب نہیں بے زور شاہی کے لئے
آؤ گتھ جائیں خدا ہی کے لئے
ورزشوں میں کچھ تکلف ہی سہی
ہاتھ پائی کو تصوف ہی سہی
ہست در ہر گوشہ ویرانہ رقص
می کند دیوانہ با دیوانہ رقص

Now we will look at the Prologue in more detail.

The prologue in Persian and its English translation by Dr. Reynold Nicholson are given first followed by brief explanation based upon the commentary by Professor Yousuf Saleem Chishti.

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

تمهید

نیست در خشک و تر بیشه من کوتاهی
چوب هر نخل که منیر نشود دارکنم
نظیری نیشابوری
راه شب چون مهر عالمتاب زد
گریه من بر رخ گل ، آب زد
اشک من از چشم نرگس خواب شست
سبزه از هنگامه ام بیدار رست
باغبان زور کلامم آزمود
مصرعی کارید و شمشیری درود
در چمن جز دانه اشکم نکشت
تار افغانم به پود باغ رشت
ذره ام مهر منیر آن من است
صد سحر اندر گریبان من است
خاک من روشن تر از جام جم است
محرم از نازادهای عالم است
فکرم ن هو سر فتراک بست
کو هنوز از نیستی بیرون نجست
سبزه ناروئیده زیب گلشنم
گل بشاخ اندر نهان در دامنم
محفل رامشگری برهم زدم
زخمه بر تار رگ عالم زدم
بسکه عود فطرتم نادر نواست
هم نشین از نغمه ام نا آشناست
در جهان خورشید نوزائیده ام
رسم و ئین فلک نادیده ام
رم ندیده انجم از تابم هنوز
هست نا آشفته سیمایم هنوز
بحر از رقص ضیایم بی نصیب
کوه از رنگ حنایم بی نصیب
خوگر من نیست چشم هست و بود
لرزه بر تن خیزم از بیم نمود

بامم از خاور رسید و شب شکست
شبم نو برگل عالم نشست
انتظار صبح خیزان می کشم
ای خوشا زرتشتیان آتشم
نغمه ام ، از زخمه بی پرواستم
من نوای شاعر فرداستم
عصر من داننده اسرار نیست
یوسف من بهر این بازار نیست
ناامید استم ز یاران قدیم
طور من سوزد که می آید کلیم
قلزم یاران چو شبم بی خروش
شبم من مثل یم طوفان بدوش
نغمه ی من از جهان دیگر است
این جرس را کاروان دیگر است
ای بسا شاعر که بعد از مرگ زاد
چشم خود بر بست و چشم ما گشاد
رخت باز از نیستی بیرون کشید
چون گل از خاک مزار خود دمید
کاروان ها گرچه زین صحرا گذشت
مثل گام ناقه کم غوغا گذشت
عاشقم ، فریاد ، ایمان من است
شور حشر از پیش خیزان من است
نغمه ام ز اندازه تار است بیش
من نترسم از شکست عود خویش
قطره از سیلاب من بیگانه به
قلزم از شوب او دیوانه به
در نمی گنجد بجو عمان من
بحرها باید پی طوفان من
غنچه کز بالیدگی گلشن نشد
در خور ابر بهار من نشد
برقها خوابیده در جان من است
کوه و صحرا باب جولان من است
پنجه کن با بحر ار صحراستی
برق من در گیر اگر سیناستی
چشمه حیوان براتم کرده اند

محرم راز حیاتم کرده اند
ذره از سوز نوایم زنده گشت
پر گشود و کرمک تابنده گشت
هیچکس ، رازی که من گویم ، نگفت
همچو فکر من در معنی نسفت
سر عیش جاودان خواهی بیا
هم زمین ، هم آسمان خواهی بیا
پیر گردون بامن این اسرار گفت
از ندیمان رازها نتوان نهفت
ساقیا برخیز و می در جام کن
محو از دل کاوش ایام کن
شعله ی بی که اصلش زمزم است
گر گدا باشد پرستارش جم است
می کند اندیشه را هشیار تر
دیده ی بیدار را بیدار تر
اعتبار کوه بخشد کاه را
قوت شیران دهد روباه را
خاک را اوج ثریا میدهد
قطره را پهنای دریا میدهد
خامشی را شورش محشر کند
پای کبک از خون باز احمر کند
خیز و در جامم شراب ناب ریز
بر شب اندیشه ام مهتاب ریز
تا سوی منزل کشم واره را
ذوق بیتابی دهم نظاره را
گرم رو از جستجوی نو شوم
روشناس رزوی نو شوم
چشم اهل ذوق را مردم شوم
چون صدا در گوش عالم گم شوم
قیمت جنس سخن بالا کنم
ب چشم خویش در کالاکنم
باز بر خوانم ز فیض پیر روم
دفتر سر بسته اسرار علوم
جان او از شعله ها سرمایه دار
من فروغ یک نفس مثل شرار

شمع سوزان تاخت بر پروانه ام
باده شبخون ریخت بر پیمانه ام
پیر رومی خاک را اکسیر کرد
از غبارم جلوه ها تعمیر کرد
ذره از خاک بیابان رخت بست
تا شعاع قناب رد بدست
موجم و در بحر او منزل کنم
تا در تابنده ئی حاصل کنم
من که مستی ها ز صهبایش کنم
زندگانی از نفس هایش کنم
شب دل من مایل فریاد بود
خامشی از «یا ربم» باد بود
شکوه شوب غم دوران بدم
از تهی پیمانگی نالان بدم
این قدر نظاره ام بیتاب شد
بال و پر بشکست و خر خواب شد
روی خود بنمود پیر حق سرشت
کو بحرف پهلوی قر ن نوشت
گفت «ای دیوانه ی ارباب عشق
جرعه ئی گیر از شراب ناب عشق
بر جگر هنگامه ی محشر بزن
شیشه بر سر ، دیده بر نشتر بزن
خنده را سرماییه ی صد ناله ساز
اشک خونین را جگر پرکاله ساز
تا بکی چون غنچه می باشی خموش
نکعت خود را چو گل ارزان فروش
در گره هنگامه داری چون سپند
محمل خود بر سر تش به بند
چون جرس خر ز هر جزو بدن
ناله ی خاموش را بیرون فکن
تش استی بزم عالم بر فروز
دیگران را هم ز سوز خود بسوز
فاش گو اسرار پیر می فروش
موج می شو کسوت مینا بیوش
سنگ شو آئینه اندیشه را

بر سر بازار بشکن شیشه را
از نیستان همچو نی پیغام ده
قیس را از قوم «حی» پیغام ده
ناله را انداز نو ایجاد کن
بزم را از های و هو باد کن
خیز و جان نو بده هر زنده را
از «قم» خود زنده تر کن زنده را
خیز و پا بر جاده ی دیگر بنه
جوش سودای کهن از سر بنه
شنای لذت گفتار شو
«ای درای کاروان بیدار شو
زین سخن تش به پیراهن شدم
مثل نی هنگامه بستن شدم
چون نوا از تار خود برخاستم
جنتی از بهر گوش راستم
بر گرفتم پرده از راز خودی
وا نمودم سر اعجاز خودی
بود نقش هستیم انگاره ئی
نا قبولی ، ناکسی ، ناکاره ئی
عشق سوهان زد مرا ، دم شدم
عالم کیف و کم عالم شدم
حرکت اعصاب گردون دیده ام
در رگ مه گردش خون دیده ام
بهر انسان چشم من شبها گریست
تا دریدم پرده ی اسرار زیست
از درون کارگاه ممکنات
بر کشیدم سر تقویم حیات
من که این شب را چو مه راستم
گرد پای ملت بیضاستم
ملتی در باغ و راغ وازه اش
تش دلها سرود تازه اش
ذره کشت و فتاب انبار کرد
خرمن از صد رومی و عطار کرد
آه گرم ، رخت بر گردون کشم
گرچه دودم از تبار آتشم

خامه ام از همت فکر بلند
راز این نه پرده در صحرا فکند
قطره تا همپایه ی دریا شود
ذره از بالیدگی صحرا شود
شاعری زین مثنوی مقصود نیست
بت پرستی ، بت گری مقصود نیست
هندیم از پارسی بیگانه ام
ماه نو باشم تهی پیمانه ام
حسن انداز بیان از من مجو
خوانسار و اصفهان از من مجو
گرچه هندی در عذوبت شکر است
طرز گفتار دری شیرین تر است
فکر من از جلوه اش مسحور گشت
خامه من شاخ نخل طور گشت
پارسی از رفعت اندیشه ام
در خورد با فطرت اندیشه ام
خرده بر مینا مگیر ای هوشمند
دل بذوق خرده ی مینا به بند

PROLOGUE

WHEN the world-illuming sun rushed
upon Night like a brigand,
My weeping bedewed the face of the rose.
My tears washed away sleep from the eye of the narcissus,
My passion wakened the grass and made it grow.
The Gardener taught me to sing with power,
He sowed a verse and reaped a sword.
In the soil he planted only the seed of my tears
And wove my lament with the garden, as warp and woof.

Tho' I am but a mote, the radiant sun is mine:
Within my bosom are a hundred dawns.
My dust is brighter than Jamshíd's cup,
It knows things that are yet unborn in the world.
My thought hunted down and slung from the saddle a deer

That has not yet leaped forth from the covert of non-existence.
Fair is my garden ere yet the leaves are green:
Full-blown roses are hidden in the skirt of my garment.
I struck dumb the musicians where they were gathered together,
I smote the heartstrings of all that heard me,
Because the lute of my genius hath a rare melody:
Even to comrades my song is strange.

I am born in the world as a new sun,
I have not learned the ways and fashions of the sky:
Not yet have the stars fled before my splendour,
Not yet is my quicksilver astir;
Untouched is the sea by my dancing rays,
Untouched are the mountains by my crimson hue.
The eye of existence is not familiar with me;
I rise trembling, afraid to show myself.
From the East my dawn arrived and routed Night,
A fresh dew settled on the rose of the world.
I am waiting for the votaries that rise at dawn:
Oh, happy they who shall worship my fire!
I have no need of the ear of To-day,
I am the voice of the poet of To-morrow.

My own age does not understand my deep meanings,
My Joseph is not for this market.
I despair of my old companions,
My Sinai burns for sake of the Moses who is coming.
Their sea is silent, like dew,
But my dew is storm-ridden, like the ocean.
My song is of another world than theirs:
This bell calls other travellers to take the road.
How many a poet after his death
Opened our eyes when his own were closed,
And journeyed forth again from nothingness
When roses blossomed o'er the earth of his grave!
Albeit caravans have passed through this desert,
They passed, as a camel steps, with little sound.

But I am a lover: loud crying is my faith:
The clamour of Judgement Day is one of my minions.

My song exceeds the range of the chord,
Yet I do not fear that my lute will break.
'Twere better for the waterdrop not to know my torrent,
Whose fury should rather madden the sea.
No river will contain my Omán:
My flood requires whole seas to hold it.
Unless the bud expand into a bed of roses,
It is unworthy of my spring-cloud's bounty.
Lightnings slumber within my soul,
I sweep over mountain and plain.
Wrestle with my sea, if thou art a plain;

Receive my lightning, if thou art a Sinai.
The Fountain of Life hath been given me to drink,
I have been made an adept of the mystery of Life.
The speck of dust was vitalised by my burning song:
It unfolded wings and became a firefly.
No one hath told the secret which I will tell
Or threaded a pearl of thought like mine.
Come, if thou would'st know the secret of everlasting life!
Come, if thou would'st win both earth and heaven!
The old Guru of the Sky taught me this lore,
I cannot hide it from my comrades.
O Saki! arise and pour wine into the cup,

Clear the vexation of Time from my heart!
The sparkling liquor that flows from Zemzem—
Were it a beggar, a king would pay homage to it.
It makes thought more sober and wise,
It makes the keen eye keener,
It gives to a straw the weight of a mountain,
And to foxes the strength of lions.
It causes dust to soar to the Pleiades
And a drop of water swell to the breadth of the sea.
It turns silence into the din of Judgement Day,
It makes the foot of the partridge red with blood of the hawk.
Arise and pour pure wine into my cup,
Pour moonbeams into the dark night of my thought,

That I may lead home the wanderer
And imbue the idle looker-on with restless impatience;
And advance hotly on a new quest
And become known as the champion of a new spirit;
And be to people of insight as the pupil to the eye,
And sink into the ear of the world, like a voice;
And exalt the worth of Poesy
And sprinkle the dry herbs with my tears.
Inspired by the genius of the Master of Rúm,
I rehearse the sealed book of secret lore.
His soul is the source of the flames,
I am but as the spark that gleams for a moment.

His burning candle consumed me, the moth;
His wine overwhelmed my goblet.
The Master of Rúm transmuted my earth to gold
And clothed my barren dust with beauty.
The grain of sand set forth from the desert,
That it might win the radiance of the sun.
I am a wave and I will come to rest in his sea,
That I may make the glistening pearl mine own.
I who am drunken with the wine of his song
Will draw life from the breath of his words.

'Twas night: my heart would fain lament,
The silence was filled with my cries to God.

I was complaining of the sorrows of the world
And bewailing the emptiness of my cup.
At last mine eye could endure no more,
Broken with fatigue it went to sleep.
There appeared the Master, formed in the mould of Truth,
Who wrote the Koran of Persia.
He said, "O frenzied lover,
Take a draught of love's pure wine.
Strike the chords of thine heart and rouse a tumultuous strain,
Dash thine head against the cupping-glass and thine eye against the lancet!
Make thy laughter the source of a hundred sighs,
Make the hearts of men bleed with thy tears!

How long wilt thou be silent, like a bud?
Sell thy fragrance cheap, like the rose!

Tongue-tied, thou art in pain:
Cast thyself upon the fire, like rue!
Like the bell, break silence at last, and from every limb
Utter forth a lamentation!
Thou art fire: fill the world with thy glow!
Make others burn with thy burning!
Proclaim the secrets of the old wine-seller;
Be thou a surge of wine, and the crystal cup thy robe!
Shatter the mirror of fear,
Break the bottles in the bazaar!
Like the reed-flute, bring a message from the reeds;
Give to Majnún a message from Lailá!
Create a new style for thy song,
Enrich the feast with thy piercing strains!

Up, and re-inspire every living soul!
Say 'Arise!' and by that word quicken the living!
Up, and set thy feet on another path;
Put aside the passionate melancholy of old!
Become familiar with the delight of singing;
O bell of the caravan, awake!"

At these words my bosom was enkindled
And swelled with emotion like the flute;
I rose like music from the string
To prepare a Paradise for the ear.
I unveiled the mystery of the Self
And disclosed its wondrous secret.

My being was as an unfinished statue,
Uncomely, worthless, good for nothing.
Love chiselled me: I became a man
And gained knowledge of the nature of the universe.

I have seen the movement of the sinews of the sky,
And the blood coursing in the veins of the moon.
Many a night I wept for Man's sake

That I might tear the veil from Life's mysteries,
And extract the secret of Life's constitution
From the laboratory of phenomena.
I who give beauty to this night, like the moon,
Am as dust in devotion to the pure Faith (Islam)
A Faith renowned in hill and dale,
Which kindles in men's hearts a flame of undying song:
It sowed an atom and reaped a sun,
It harvested a hundred poets like Rûmî and Attar.
I am a sigh: I will mount to the heavens;
I am a breath, yet am I sprung of fire.

Driven onward by high thoughts, my pen
Cast abroad the secret of this veil,
That the drop may become co-equal with the sea
And the grain of sand grow into a Sahara.
Poetising is not the aim of this *masnavî*,
Beauty-worshipping and love-making is not its aim.
I am of India: Persian is not my native tongue;
I am like the crescent moon: my cup is not full.
Do not seek from me charm of style in exposition,
Do not seek from me Khânsâr and Isfahan.
Although the language of Hind is sweet as sugar,
Yet sweeter is the fashion of Persian speech.

My mind was enchanted by its loveliness,
My pen became as a twig of the Burning Bush.
Because of the loftiness of my thoughts,
Persian alone is suitable to them.
O Reader, do not find fault with the wine-cup,

EXPLANATION

راه شب چون مهر عالمتاب زد

گریه من بر رخ گل ، آب زد

اشک من از چشم نرگس خواب شست

سبزه از هنگامه ام بیدار رست
باغبان زور کلامم آزمود
مصرعی کارید و شمشیری درود
در چمن جز دانه اشکم نکشت
تار افغانم به پود باغ رش

When the world-illuminating sun rushed
upon Night like a brigand
My weeping bedewed the face of the rose.
My tears washed away sleep from the eye of the narcissus,
My passion wakened the grass and made it grow.
The Gardener taught me to sing with power,
He sowed a verse and reaped a sword.
In the soil he planted only the seed of my tears
And wove my lament with the garden, as warp and woof.

In Eastern poetry certain metaphors are used whose intended meaning can be determined either from the context or from knowledge of similar usage of these metaphors found in the poetry of other masters. Iqbal uses some metaphors and similes very frequently. Sun and Gardner refer to Allah, the God. Night and darkness refer to the plight of the Muslims of his times who were “living in the dark”. Morning, dawn and day break refer to the poet wishing for the dawn of a new era of enlightenment and progress. His tears are his verses and thoughts. The flower could imply the budding Muslim youth. His songs are his poems.

Hence the following interpretation given by Yousuf Saleem Chishti in his commentary on the Secrets of the Self:

When Allah willed to bring the Muslim nation from the darkness of ignorance to enlightenment, He gave me the poetic ability to stimulate my co-religionists. My verses (tears) served as a wake-up call for the Narcissus (the sleeping Muslims) of the Muslim nation. Allah (the Gardner) sowed my verses and nurtured them so that they came out like sword, i.e., a catalytic force for action. I have been chosen exclusively for this task just as if the Gardner planted only the seeds of my tear so that only my verses grew and spread all over the Garden, the Muslims World.

ذره ام مهر منیر آن من است
صد سحر اندر گریبان من است
خاک من روشن تر از جام جم است
محرم از نازادهای عالم است
فکر من اهو سر فتراک بست
کو هنوز از نیستی بیرون نجست
سبزه ناروئیده زیب گلشنم
گل بشاخ اندر نهان در دامنم
محفل رامشگری برهم زدم
زخمه بر تار رگ عالم زدم
بسکه عود فطرتم نادر نواست
هم نشین از نغمه ام نا آشناست

Tho' I am but a mote, the radiant sun is mine:

Within my bosom are a hundred dawns.

My dust is brighter than Jamshíd's cup,

It knows things that are yet unborn in the world.

My thought hunted down and slung from the saddle a deer
That has not yet leaped forth from the covert of non-existence.
Fair is my garden ere yet the leaves are green:
Full-blown roses are hidden in the skirt of my garment.
I struck dumb the musicians where they were gathered together,
I smote the heartstrings of all that heard me,
Because the lute of my genius hath a rare melody:
Even to comrades my song is strange.

In the first part of the prologue Iqbal praised Allah for giving him the gift of writing that would galvanize the Muslim nation. In the second part he seems to be in a self-indulgent mood. Yusuf Saleem Chisti mentions that this style of description is befitting for a poet who achieves an insider's knowledge into the rise and fall of nations.

I think that Iqbal is not simply talking about his talents. He recognizes his humble beginning as a speck of dust; a description of mankind and not just a personal statement of humility. He is referring to every human being who can rise above his humble beginning to a level where he can begin to see the reality as broad day light. He is not claiming prophethood, and this needs to be borne in mind.

He goes on to describe the status of man as being higher than that of the sun that has been made subservient to man. Through his creativity man can shape a hundred dawns, that is, change the course of his life. He develops farsightedness that can tell him what lies ahead. Is Iqbal referring to clairvoyance or is he simply stating that using intellect man can determine the consequences of individual as well as collective actions? He refers to his world as a garden that has the capacity to bear new flowers and it is up to the man to choose the right seeds (correct actions and appropriate choices) to beautify this world with the product. He wants to direct his readers from a

life of song and pleasure to a new music that is invigorating and not just inebriating.

In his Urdu poem ساقی نامہ Iqbal writes:

پلا دے مجھے وہ مئے پردہ سوز

کہ آتی نہیں فصلِ گل روز روز

وہ مے جس سے روشن ضمیر حیات

وہ مے جس سے ہے مستی کائنات

وہ مے جس میں ہے سوز و ساز ازل

وہ مے جس سے کھلتا ہے راز ازل

اٹھا ساقیا پردہ اس راز سے

لڑا دے مولے کو شہباز سے

زمانے کے انداز بدلے گئے

نیا راگ ہے، ساز بدلے گئے

Mohammad Iqbal felt that his poetry and philosophy would be appreciated more fully after his death. His message is the message of love. The secrets of love cannot be explained fully in mere words; love is something to be felt in order to be appreciated. There may be technical flaws in how he expresses himself. People with limited understanding of abstract concepts should not try to read his poetry. He likens the depth and breadth of his thought process

to a sea. A proper understanding of his poetry requires men of higher intellect.

He attributes his vision to the mercy of Allah. He has been gifted with an insight into the secrets and realities of life. His poetry can raise the intellectual standard of his readers so that they achieve the ability to share his insight.

Iqbal's poetry is full of love for the Holy Prophet Mohammad peace be upon him. He requests Allah to instill that love into his heart. When he asks for wine, the sparkling liquor that flows from Zemzem, he is referring to that love. This love can turn a beggar into a king. It increases the acuteness of thought and sharpens the inner eye that leads to the recognition of the Ultimate Reality. A weak human being becomes as strong as a mountain and a fox rises to the stature of a lion.

It causes dust to soar to the Pleiades and makes the foot of the partridge red with blood of the hawk. The human being made of dust can explore the Universe, and weaklings can conquer the world. He seeks a new role for his poetry such that he becomes the champion of a new spirit and the voice of a new age.

He then turns his attention to Jalaluddin Rumi whom he has described as his spiritual mentor. The sequence of the prologue reflects the main sources of Iqbal's philosophy; the Holy Quran, the love of the Holy Prophet peace be upon him based upon an insightful study of his life and character, and the works of Rumi. Rumi's masterpiece poem, *مثنوی*, has been described as the (interpretation) of the Holy Quran in Persian.

Iqbal describes his struggle in achieving a real understanding of the philosophy of religion as he made a supplication to God.

I was complaining of the sorrows of the world
And bewailing the emptiness of my cup.
At last mine eye could endure no more,
Broken with fatigue it went to sleep.

There appeared the Master, formed in the mould of Truth,
Who wrote the Koran of Persia.

He makes sure that his readers understand the debt he owes to Rumi. He recognizes that his own stature is nothing compared with that of his mentor. He himself is a drop of water, his mentor an ocean. Rumi's poetry has provided Iqbal with both an inspiration and a deep understanding of the religion so that now he will revitalize the Muslims and explain the secrets of life to them.

I who am drunken with the wine of his song
Will draw life from the breath of his words.

The Master provides a series of instructions to his protégé the foremost being to develop the true love of the Holy Prophet peace be upon him.

Take a draught of love's pure wine

Armed with love the young poet will be able to conquer his fear and declare his understanding of the hidden realities openly, i.e., break the bottles in the bazaar. His will be the old message in a new style compatible with his times.

Shatter the mirror of fear,
Break the bottles in the bazaar!
Like the reed-flute, bring a message from the reeds;
Give to Majnún a message from Lailá!
Create a new style for thy song,
Enrich the feast with thy piercing strains!

The mentor's words kindled a fire in the poet's heart preparing him for the task ahead. It seems like the writing of the Secrets of the Self was inspired while reading Rumi. Did Iqbal see Rumi say this to him in a dream?

At these words my bosom was enkindled
And swelled with emotion like the flute;
I rose like music from the string
To prepare a Paradise for the ear.

I unveiled the mystery of the. Self
And disclosed its wondrous secret.

Prior to this spiritual encounter Iqbal had considered himself as worthless.
He was unaware of his hidden potential. A study of Rumi's works made him
discover himself.

Love chiselled me: I became a man
And gained knowledge of the nature of the universe

Now he can see meaning in the terrestrial and celestial phenomena, and
more than that, he now has the ability to describe these through his poetry.
All of these celestial bodies and phenomena point towards the existence of
one God, one Creator.

He now describes the real purpose of his poetry drawing inspiration from the
Holy Quran, love of the Holy Prophet peace be upon him and works of
Rumi. He wants to serve his faith and his co-religionists. He wants the
Muslim nation to regain its lost glory through his poetry. He feels for his
fellow beings. He feels their pain.

Many a night I wept for Man's sake
That I might tear the veil from Life's mysteries,
And extract the secret of Life's constitution
From the laboratory of phenomena.

He expresses his pride at being a follower of the faith of Islam. He describes
him

as dust in devotion to the pure Faith (Islam)
A Faith renowned in hill and dale

Through self-realization the members of his community will rise again.

Iqbal then describes why he chose Persian to be the medium of expression
for his philosophy.

Iqbal hoped that through the medium of Persian he would gain a wider audience in India, Afghanistan and Iran.
Sadly this beautiful language has only a few admirers in India and Pakistan of today.

My aim in writing this masnavi is not to gain poetic glory

Nor is it to idolize the beloved

Or to carve out new idols

I am a native of India; Persian is not my language

I am the new moon; my cup is yet to be filled

Do not except from me mere beauty of expression

Do not look for the style of the poets of Khansar and Ispahan in my poetry

The Language of Hind is sweet no doubt

The style of Persian poetry is even sweeter

Its manifest beauty has fascinated my imaginative thinking

My pen has been turned into a twig of the Tree on the Mount Toor

For the loftiness of my thought and its nature

Persian is most suitable

O the sensible one! Do not criticize the tumbler of wine

Tie your heart with a taste for what is inside it.

Do not try to find fault with my poetry in terms of its literary qualities. On the other hand focus on its message.